

Flashing Lights may be fun, but flashing Santa is not



PHOTOGRAPH BY JIMMY L. LACORRAL

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Sunday

BALANCED NEWS, FRANK OPINIONS

Doctor of champions makes it to Winter Games

By Christine E. Espinosa
 ANTI-DOPING INSPECTION has been joined to the site of the 2006 Winter Games, and the clinical conditioning of athletes in the 2006 Winter Games.



Gov't to Meralco: Pay up

'Power play' may leave energy chief powerless

By G.C. Cabaogang

A POWER PLAY IS UNFOLDING AT THE Department of Energy.
 A top Department of Energy official has been pushing for the creation of the Strategic Oil Gas Energy Bureau and downplayed the role of the Energy Development and Planning Office (EDPO) in the creation of the new Energy Bureau.

The creation, who asked that his name be withheld on grounds that he wanted to avoid personality clashes within the Cabinet, claimed Alegre was the proponent of the Energy Bureau. "I'm warning the government not to do this," he said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo signed the EDPO on Nov. 25. The new body has not yet been created.

In a last-minute move, Alegre submitted "discovery" of the formation of the body with the EDPO a few months ago but denied he had authorized the EDPO, saying he did not know who was behind it.

Alegre also said he did know who would lead the body.

The report found the new body is a definite addition to the bureau for the creation of the EDPO, on its own, he said, could do the job better.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JIMMY L. LACORRAL

RP on verge of biggest real estate boom in 30 years

By G.C. Cabaogang

THE PHILIPPINES IS ON THE VERGE OF what could be the country's biggest property boom in nearly three decades, fueled by money from overseas Filipinos, investment from businessmen and increased government spending.

But Asian Real Estate Institute said the real estate industry could only reach its full potential if President Macapagal-Arroyo's resolution for biggest (2006-2010) was supported by legislation that the cabinet has to pass.

"It's not a matter of if, but when the cabinet will pass the legislation," said the institute's president, who said the institute is in the process of lobbying for the legislation.



CELEBRATING THE FILIPINO Christmas, the lights in a giant Christmas tree are illuminated at Rizal Park with flowers in colors of the Philippine flag. The tree is the centerpiece of the "Pantawagang Sa mga Pilipino" in Rizal Park. The tree is the centerpiece of the "Pantawagang Sa mga Pilipino" in Rizal Park. The tree is the centerpiece of the "Pantawagang Sa mga Pilipino" in Rizal Park.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JIMMY L. LACORRAL

Senate rejects ConCom report: It's so Marcos

By Julia Lopez-Jarilla and Philip C. Torres

THE WAY IT LOOKS, THE RECOMMENDATIONS of the Committee on Constitutional Change do not stand a chance

in the Senate. Senate panelists have rejected the report of the committee formed by President Macapagal-Arroyo, despite the call of Arroyo's Bay Area allies, who claim the House committee on constitutional amendments, for the Senate to keep the report in the Senate.

According to Senate President Franklin Drilon, Majority Leader Pansy Pangalanan and Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, the Senate committee on the report

would not be acceptable to those who would oppose the report, or to the people at large.

"The move is dead, dead, dead," quipped Sen. Arroyo.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JIMMY L. LACORRAL



JUST-DO-IT MOMENTS AT THE 17th ASIAN PARA GAMES
 (Left) Para-athlete (left) in the 100m race. (Right) Para-athlete (right) in the 100m race. (Left) Para-athlete (left) in the 100m race. (Right) Para-athlete (right) in the 100m race.



DOLE sets holiday pay guidelines

By Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT yesterday issued the guidelines for workers who report for duty on Dec. 26 (Monday) and Dec. 31 (Saturday), which Malacañang has declared special non-working days.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said those who work on Dec. 26 and 31 are entitled to receive 30 percent more of their daily wage, and another 30 percent more of their hourly rate for overtime work.

Workers who report for duty on these days even if it's their day-off would be paid an additional 50 percent of their daily rate plus 30 percent more of this hourly rate in case of overtime.

Sto. Tomas stressed that on special non-working days, the "no work, no pay" policy applies unless there was a favorable company policy, practice or collective bargaining agreement provision granting payment on a special day even if the day was unworked.

For Dec. 25 (Christmas), Dec. 30 (Rizal Day) and Jan. 1 (New Year's Day), which are regular holidays, the following rules apply:

Workers who report for duty on any of these days shall have their daily pay doubled. They would also be paid an additional 30 percent of their hourly rate if they work overtime.

If the days fall on an employee's rest day and he/she reports for work, the same rule applies except that the daily pay would become 230 percent.

As this developed, an estimated 5 million minimum wage earners will no longer have to pay the 10 percent withholding tax.

Trade Union Congress of the Philippines secretary general Ernesto "Boy" Herrera said yesterday the government decision to provide the tax exemption would be a "considerable relief to ordinary workers."

"At this difficult time when both industries and labor are reeling from the punches of the expanded value-added tax (VAT) and soaring energy prices, government should share in the pain by finally removing the withholding tax on low-wage earners," the former senator said.

3,000 Pinoys headed to New Caledonia

A BIG MINING COMPANY IN NEW CALEDONIA, a French territory located in the South Pacific, will hire some 3,000 Filipino workers for a large-scale mining project on the island, the Department of Foreign Affairs said Friday.

The DFA said Inco-Goro Nickel Co. of New Caledonia (INCO), said to be the biggest nickel mining company in the world, will employ the workers for the construction of a nickel and cobalt processing plant.

AG&P Phil. and EEI Phil. will facilitate the deployment of the workers who are expected to arrive in batches up to an estimated 3,000 by the middle of next year.

The project is expected to be completed in 2007.

Philippine Consul General to Sydney Maria Theresa Lazaro met with INCO executives on Dec. 13 in a media conference held in Noumea, the capital of New Caledonia.

In a report to the DFA, Lazaro said the mining executives gave the assurance that the Filipino workers' rights would be observed and protected, in accordance with international and local labor laws.

"The Philippines looks forward to the successful implementation of this project. We are proud to contribute our share in the future development of New Caledonia," Lazaro said in a statement.

She added: "We hope that this paves the way for future areas of cooperation that would be ultimately beneficial to all."

Nikko Dizon

The World

Editor Lawrence B. Gueco

Bush authorized secretive spying in US, says official

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH has personally authorized a secretive wiretapping program in the United States more than three dozen times since October 2001, a senior intelligence official said.

The disclosure follows angry demands by lawmakers earlier this year on Friday for congressional inquiries into whether the monitoring by the highly secret National Security Agency is abused and illegal.

"There is no doubt that the intelligence community has been inappropriately abused," said Sen. Byron Dorgan, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee. "It is a serious matter."

Back in Friday, he said, he was not sure whether he had authorized such domestic spying without consulting Congress. He promised to keep the issue in mind.

In a broad defense of the program, the president said that the wiretapping was necessary to protect the nation's security. He said that the program was not designed to go after anyone but those who threaten the United States.

The official said that, since October 2001, the program has been reviewed more than 30 times. Each time, the

"I will make the point," Bush said in a television interview with the *Washington Post*. "The program is not secret. It is not a secret program. It is a program that is authorized by the president."

The revelation, disclosed in *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal*, is said to allow the agency to monitor international calls and e-mail messages of people in the United States. The program, the agency would use to monitor international calls and e-mail messages of people in the United States.

"I want to know precisely what they did," the official said. "The program is not secret. It is not a secret program. It is a program that is authorized by the president."

Sen. Byron Dorgan, a Democrat, said that the program was not designed to go after anyone but those who threaten the United States.



SEN. BYRON DORGAN

Least popular

NEW ORLEANS—Despite losing 30 Bush votes in the last popular vote, the last US president, George W. Bush, was the least popular of the last 10 US presidents.

Only nine percent of the 142 people polled said that Bush was the best president. The rest of the presidents were rated as follows: Clinton (25 percent), Ford (20 percent), Reagan (20 percent), Carter (15 percent), Nixon (15 percent), Kennedy (10 percent), Johnson (10 percent), Eisenhower (10 percent), and Truman (10 percent).

Bush was also named as the least popular president in the last 10 US presidents. The rest of the presidents were rated as follows: Clinton (25 percent), Ford (20 percent), Reagan (20 percent), Carter (15 percent), Nixon (15 percent), Kennedy (10 percent), Johnson (10 percent), Eisenhower (10 percent), and Truman (10 percent).

US House moves to halt illegal immigration flood

WASHINGTON—THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON Friday passed a bill aimed at stopping the flood of illegal immigrants into the United States after a debate that exposed deep divisions among majority Republicans and President George W. Bush's guest member.

The House voted 229-182 for the legislation that aims to crack down on illegal immigration by forcing employers to verify the status of workers and raising fines against those who knowingly hire illegal aliens.

It also calls for construction of a high-tech fence along parts of the U.S. border with Mexico, and sets for a study of other border issues along the Canadian border.

It would also make it a felony to hire or contract with anyone to assist in the illegal immigration of anyone into the United States.

They would have the one year to get a green card. A green card holder who has been deported for a crime would have to wait one year before being able to re-enter the country.

In Mexico, presidential spokesman Roberto Abascal said that the administration would support the bill. He said that the administration would support the bill.

An immigration agency that only considers asylum cases would be able to deny the asylum seekers. He said that the administration would support the bill.

That would mean that 1 million unauthorized immigrants who are currently in the United States would be able to stay in the United States. He said that the administration would support the bill.

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Iraqis massively back key poll

BAHRAIN—AN UNPUBLISHED poll of Iraqi voters in southern Iraq showed that 90 percent of voters support the current government. The poll was conducted by a private company.

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IRAQI election workers look at the images later of their group at an Iraqi national election polling station in Baghdad, Nov. 28. A group of people are seen looking at a screen.

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Zarqawi captured, unwittingly freed

AMMAN—IRAQI SECURITY FORCES captured al-Qaida leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq last week but released him because they did not know who he was, a senior Iraqi official said.

The official said that the forces captured Zarqawi but did not know who he was. He said that the forces captured Zarqawi but did not know who he was.

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Toxic slick threatens Russia

**YULIYEVICH, BUL-
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Visisla cops 2 golds; Thailand breaks loose

THE PHILIPPINES SUCCEEDED in three gold medals, one silver and one bronze, in the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, China, on Sunday.

The men's 100m sprint was won by Visisla, who took the gold medal in 10.10 seconds.

Visisla also won the 200m sprint in 21.47 seconds, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 21.50 seconds.

Visisla's 400m sprint was won by Visisla in 50.10 seconds, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 50.15 seconds.

Visisla's 800m sprint was won by Visisla in 1:50.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 1:50.15.

Visisla's 1,600m sprint was won by Visisla in 4:10.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 4:10.15.

Visisla's 3,200m sprint was won by Visisla in 8:20.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 8:20.15.

Visisla's 6,400m sprint was won by Visisla in 16:40.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 16:40.15.

Visisla's 12,800m sprint was won by Visisla in 33:20.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 33:20.15.

Visisla's 25,600m sprint was won by Visisla in 66:40.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 66:40.15.

Visisla's 51,200m sprint was won by Visisla in 133:20.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 133:20.15.

Visisla's 102,400m sprint was won by Visisla in 266:40.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 266:40.15.

Visisla's 204,800m sprint was won by Visisla in 533:20.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 533:20.15.

Visisla's 409,600m sprint was won by Visisla in 1,066:40.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 1,066:40.15.

Visisla's 819,200m sprint was won by Visisla in 2,133:20.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 2,133:20.15.

Visisla's 1,638,400m sprint was won by Visisla in 4,266:40.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 4,266:40.15.

Visisla's 3,276,800m sprint was won by Visisla in 8,533:20.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 8,533:20.15.

Visisla's 6,553,600m sprint was won by Visisla in 17,066:40.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 17,066:40.15.

Visisla's 13,107,200m sprint was won by Visisla in 34,133:20.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 34,133:20.15.

Visisla's 26,214,400m sprint was won by Visisla in 68,266:40.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 68,266:40.15.

Visisla's 52,428,800m sprint was won by Visisla in 136,533:20.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 136,533:20.15.

Visisla's 104,857,600m sprint was won by Visisla in 273,066:40.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 273,066:40.15.

Visisla's 209,715,200m sprint was won by Visisla in 546,133:20.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 546,133:20.15.

Visisla's 419,430,400m sprint was won by Visisla in 1,092,266:40.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 1,092,266:40.15.

Visisla's 838,860,800m sprint was won by Visisla in 2,184,533:20.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 2,184,533:20.15.

Visisla's 1,677,721,600m sprint was won by Visisla in 4,369,066:40.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 4,369,066:40.15.

Visisla's 3,355,443,200m sprint was won by Visisla in 8,738,133:20.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 8,738,133:20.15.

Visisla's 6,710,886,400m sprint was won by Visisla in 17,476,266:40.10, beating Thailand's Chaiyachit in 17,476,266:40.15.

Thailand broke loose in the 100m sprint, taking the gold medal in 10.15 seconds.

Thailand's 200m sprint was won by Thailand in 21.50 seconds, beating Visisla in 21.47 seconds.

Thailand's 400m sprint was won by Thailand in 50.15 seconds, beating Visisla in 50.10 seconds.

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Thailand's 13,421,772,800m sprint was won by Thailand in 34,952,533:20.15, beating Visisla in 34,952,533:20.10 seconds.

Thailand's 26,843,545,600m sprint was won by Thailand in 69,905,066:40.15, beating Visisla in 69,905,066:40.10 seconds.

Severino, Lopez share chess lead with 3 wins each

By Neri Martin Soriano

FOR MAESTRO Severino and Grandmaster Lopez, the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, China, were a triumph.

Severino, 34, won his first gold medal in the 100m sprint, taking the gold medal in 10.15 seconds.

Lopez, 34, won his first gold medal in the 200m sprint, taking the gold medal in 21.50 seconds.

Severino's 400m sprint was won by Severino in 50.15 seconds, beating Lopez in 50.10 seconds.

Lopez's 800m sprint was won by Lopez in 1:50.15, beating Severino in 1:50.10 seconds.

Severino's 1,600m sprint was won by Severino in 4:10.15, beating Lopez in 4:10.10 seconds.

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Severino's 102,400m sprint was won by Severino in 266:40.15, beating Lopez in 266:40.10 seconds.

Lopez's 204,800m sprint was won by Lopez in 533:20.15, beating Severino in 533:20.10 seconds.

Severino's 409,600m sprint was won by Severino in 1,066:40.15, beating Lopez in 1,066:40.10 seconds.

Lopez's 819,200m sprint was won by Lopez in 2,133:20.15, beating Severino in 2,133:20.10 seconds.

Severino's 1,638,400m sprint was won by Severino in 4,266:40.15, beating Lopez in 4,266:40.10 seconds.

Lopez's 3,276,800m sprint was won by Lopez in 8,533:20.15, beating Severino in 8,533:20.10 seconds.

Severino's 6,553,600m sprint was won by Severino in 17,066:40.15, beating Lopez in 17,066:40.10 seconds.

Lopez's 13,107,200m sprint was won by Lopez in 34,133:20.15, beating Severino in 34,133:20.10 seconds.

Severino's 26,214,400m sprint was won by Severino in 68,266:40.15, beating Lopez in 68,266:40.10 seconds.

Lopez's 52,428,800m sprint was won by Lopez in 136,533:20.15, beating Severino in 136,533:20.10 seconds.

Severino's 104,857,600m sprint was won by Severino in 273,066:40.15, beating Lopez in 273,066:40.10 seconds.

Lopez's 209,715,200m sprint was won by Lopez in 546,133:20.15, beating Severino in 546,133:20.10 seconds.

Severino's 419,430,400m sprint was won by Severino in 1,092,266:40.15, beating Lopez in 1,092,266:40.10 seconds.

Lopez's 838,860,800m sprint was won by Lopez in 2,184,533:20.15, beating Severino in 2,184,533:20.10 seconds.

Severino's 1,677,721,600m sprint was won by Severino in 4,369,066:40.15, beating Lopez in 4,369,066:40.10 seconds.

Lopez's 3,355,443,200m sprint was won by Lopez in 8,738,133:20.15, beating Severino in 8,738,133:20.10 seconds.

Severino's 6,710,886,400m sprint was won by Severino in 17,476,266:40.15, beating Lopez in 17,476,266:40.10 seconds.

RP golfers finish 3rd in Putra Cup

THE PHILIPPINE GOLF ASSOCIATION (PGA) announced the results of the 2010 Putra Cup, which was held in Manila on Sunday.

The men's 100m sprint was won by Severino in 10.15 seconds, beating Lopez in 10.10 seconds.

Lopez's 200m sprint was won by Lopez in 21.50 seconds, beating Severino in 21.47 seconds.

Severino's 400m sprint was won by Severino in 50.15 seconds, beating Lopez in 50.10 seconds.

Lopez's 800m sprint was won by Lopez in 1:50.15, beating Severino in 1:50.10 seconds.

Severino's 1,600m sprint was won by Severino in 4:10.15, beating Lopez in 4:10.10 seconds.

Lopez's 3,200m sprint was won by Lopez in 8:20.15, beating Severino in 8:20.10 seconds.

Severino's 6,400m sprint was won by Severino in 16:40.15, beating Lopez in 16:40.10 seconds.

Lopez's 12,800m sprint was won by Lopez in 33:20.15, beating Severino in 33:20.10 seconds.

Severino's 25,600m sprint was won by Severino in 66:40.15, beating Lopez in 66:40.10 seconds.

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Lopez's 13,421,772,800m sprint was won by Lopez in 34,952,533:20.15, beating Severino in 34,952,533:20.10 seconds.

Severino's 26,843,545,600m sprint was won by Severino in 69,905,066:40.15, beating Lopez in 69,905,066:40.10 seconds.

The men's 200m sprint was won by Lopez in 21.50 seconds, beating Severino in 21.47 seconds.

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New Maguindanao sultan to pursue self-determination

A NEWLY ENTHRONED Sultan in Maguindanao said he will actively pursue the right to self-rule for Maguindanao people under the United Nations Charter and international agreements.

Datu Amir Baraguir, a writer-historian, was named to the royal throne as Seri Paduka Sultan Sayyid Hadji Datu Amir bin Muhammad Baraguir during solemn traditional ceremonies at the Estosan Garden Hotel in Cotabato City.

Baraguir, who used to write a column for

the *INQUIRER*, was enthroned as Maguindanao's 25th Sultan on Dec. 12.

The third son of the late Sultan Muhammad G.M. Baraguir and Bai Fatima Carmen Andong, Baraguir traces his roots from Mindanao's three historic royal ties—Maguindanao, Buayan and Kabuntalan.

The 45-year-old Sultan noted that UN Charter provisions applicable to colonized nations and states like Maguindanao "or 'Mindanao' in today's parlance" in effect provided every Filipino the duty "to help, if not cause, Maguindanao to pursue [the] right [to self-determination]."

Indigenous nationhood

He said forms of self-determination the UN has resolved in recognizing "indigenous nationhood" ranged from "autonomous future" to "nationhood past" (in the case of Maguindanao) under the so-called Indian Doctrine.

He said he hoped a shift to the federal parliamentary form of government could give more substance to these rights "under the Principle of Incorporation" of nations in international laws.

But he lamented that contemporary sultans have had "little else to do" than acting as "symbols of unity for those whose traditional and historical moorings are still intact, and in serving in limited capacity as a patron of Maguindanao arts, culture and tradition."

Today the sultan no longer has the powers and authorities to address the problems of "inadequate or inappropriate education, poverty, high mortality and morbidity rates, lack of stable peace and the absence of a proper and more integrated moral, social and cultural direction" according to Baraguir.

Under the reign of Sultan Muhammad Dipatuan Qudratullah Nasiruddin, better known in history as Sultan Kudarat, the sultanate's dominion expanded to as far north as Zamboanga Peninsula; part of today's Maguindanao province; Caraga Region (i.e. ceded to Spain under the 1645 Lopez-Kudarat Treaty); and Basilan to the West. For a time, the reign subjugated the old Kingdom of Ternate in the present-day Indonesia.

He fiercely resisted Spain's futile attempts to conquer Maguindanao.

Mandate

Baraguir said the diminishing mandate of the sultanate has been detrimental to the Philippine government and a "misfortune" to Maguindanao.

But this state of affairs need not continue, he said.

The royal leadership, he said, will act as catalyst in pursuit of Maguindanao's right to self-determination and serve as the voice of the underprivileged and advocate of redistributive justice in Maguindanao and, if possible, the world.

"The current Sultanate of Maguindanao is committed to the creative restoration of all [its] roles during the Era of Independence, without radically uprooting the present regime, and in accordance with constitutional law, order and propriety," Baraguir said in his 10-minute speech.

Baraguir said it was "in the interest of the Maguindanao people, the Philippine state, and the global community that the sultanate be explored as a dynamic institution for more rational and sustainable peace in this part of the world" – and which, he said, has legal and moral bases.

He cited provisions of the UN Charter that guarantees the principle of self-determination for colonized nations and states "similar to the once-sovereign Maguindanao."

"Thus, Filipinos from the ordinary citizens to the highest policy-makers, are not only morally but legally obliged to help, if not cause, Maguindanao to pursue that right (self-governance). For the peoples of Maguindanao, this is a supreme patriotic duty," Baraguir said. *Nash Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS Sayyid Hajji Datu Amir Andong bin Muhammad Baraguir, the Sultan of Maguindanao, poses with Datu Dacula VI of Sibugay during the Enthronement Rites held Dec. 12.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Still a Merry Christmas

By Tina S. Santos

SIXTEEN THEIR APPARENT DILEMMA is stop the ongoing construction of a secondary building for teachers inside the protected bioscience forest (the krus) Maunabo, a group of environmentalists say not about to give up the fight.

"The issue is not yet heated. We'll remain vigilant because we feel that it's our responsibility to protect the environment, and in the spirit of Christmas, we'll still celebrate having a party but a simple solo solo (singing) inside the forest," said Angeline Pineda, president of Forest Foundation, the park steward.

Dubbed as "Tula sa Dulat," the Christmas party, which will be held today, will be attended by environmental advocates and artists who draw inspiration from the forest park's lush settings. It will be preceded by a Mass to be celebrated by visiting priest Fr. Robert Reyes.

The construction of the educational facility is a much-dold Maunabo reclaimed by the foundation against the city government which is pushing for a Maunabo Regional High School.

Whose has opposed the construction of the building inside the park—which was earlier declared an archaeological

site—saying the issue would result in the destruction of trees inside what it calls Maunabo's "belly bag."

Since a Memorandum of Agreement signed on Nov. 19, 1993, the City Hall named over the 2,140-acre property to the foundation which developed it as a park with lush greenery and a home for environmentalists.

The city government, however, said the agreement is not binding because it was never approved by the City Council.

Part-to-constructors continue to let the park despite the fact that its park has been valued down by the city government due to the construction.



LANTERN PARADE

Children from an urban, poor community in the north make display Christmas lanterns fashioned out of waste materials, newspapers, and Alkaline. These half-baked lanterns are all Merry Christmas.

(PHOTO BY JIMMY L. LACOR)



Making it in market that favors imports

IN A FIELD WHERE INTERNATIONAL brands dominate the rubber and casual shoe markets, one local shoemaker found and carved out a niche a little long after it was launched 20 years ago.

In a country where the people are 'importers of choices,' World Balance continues to have a huge following.

"Shoes are generally closer to 'bricks,'" says Amanteo Chong, director for Whaler Bros. Marketing Corp., the company behind the World Balance shoe line.

"They always associate brands with quality. If you have a brand that is local, soundings, discounts are, it will have a much following even if you have good quality products. Still, if you have a design containing brand but with low quality, Filipinos will not purchase your products," he explains.

"So we came out with a foreign-sounding label with very good quality so people will still come back and buy our products," he added.

This, according to Chong, is the principal edge of their brand. But although World Balance has been a big hit among Filipinos, the brand became a huge success that almost every Filipino knows the brand and purchases the products.

But how did they arrive at the brand name, which, he says, has been decades now, but has a familiar name in Filipino because it rhymes?

"I thought of using the word 'brand' because it is incorporating, it also covers the word of choice which we dominate. I then paired it up with 'balance' to describe our company's eye for quality. After all, shoes, to have a better fit, should be made with the elements of balance," says Amanteo Chong.

The first products were basketball shoes. But World Balance became a brand when they introduced their flagship line—the line shoe (casuals)—in the mid-

1980s from the basketball shoes and after that shoes, World Balance focuses a variety of business to provide Filipinos with and compete with more options. Equally world class in quality is affordable because the materials, designs, labor costs, casual shoes, and styles of running and other sports articles.

But the company was not aware of the economic crisis in the early and mid 90s. "We were suffering from low exports and high cost of imported materials. We had to lower our production."

However, the company continued in producing low-cost items like slippers and sandals. When the market was suffering, we had to make sure that the brand is still alive."

And alive, it still is. World Balance continues to be the second brand of the product line who are looking for reasonably priced high-quality footwear that they can possibly wear at work and during recreation.

"Consumers are getting wise. They look for a pair that is both aesthetically appealing and very comfortable is what. Unfortunately, these are almost always associated with imported brands which are also very expensive. With World Balance, however, you get the same aesthetics and comfort at a cost around 50 percent lower," Chong says.

In a world where everything is going global, World Balance is ready to face the challenges head on. "We will continue to develop our line to produce high quality shoes at a much lower price," Chong adds while giving a hint of what the market can look forward to in the coming years of globalization, more reduction of premium Italian quality leather shoes in the line.

Finance's ...

By Benigno S. Aquino III

So I thought, why not give it a shot?" he says. He officially moved to DNL as chief executive on Jan. 1 this year and his first year has been one of healthy adjustment—living up to the Philippines as a family in new and working in an industry he knew little about at the time.

Living his wife and children have adjusted well and are enjoying being so close to their work home.

Moreover, on the other hand, has immersed himself in the business and expense business and has led the group in improving productivity and growth for the company despite the challenging business environment.

"My challenge now is to continue the strong growth of the business. There are so many opportunities out there," he says.



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LDSB Fashion insiders: Greg Brunsberg, Tom Corbelli, Marc Jacobs and François Deligne with Korean superstar Lee Young-A and supermodel Gisele Bündchen on the store's opening day

Modesty marks the man

Text and photos by Alex T. Vergara

FASHION DESIGNERS AND so-called fashion icons, especially those who put their teeth and limbs in the mouth of the fashion line of criticism, can learn a great deal about humility and appreciation from Marc Jacobs, the 42-year-old artistic director of Louis Vuitton.

The American is back recently from Hong Kong to grace the opening of the newly refurbished and expanded LV store at the posh landmark mall (see related story). It's his first time in Manila, a city of his nation's fashion retail scene and one of the fastest growing cities.

Dressed in a crisp white shirt, black

trousers, black pants and white socks with matching white sports socks, Jacobs, while modestly taking a drag on his Marlboro Lights, answered all sorts of questions—from where he got his ideas to his stance on the rising "branding fever"—a theme, as him by *Business Journal* columnist all over the region.

As he, who immediately went on a theme of fashion, also touched on the personal problem of remembering. Gladly enough, he is pressed for it being asked. Since not a few journalists considered him a walking fashion dictionary, he also found himself explaining the difference between luxury and opulence.

As for an inspirational gig, noting current events definitely made him chuckle but, the witty and self-deprecating designer holds no ill will. But, he believes it is a state of today's very real mood. Lighten up, okay?

That does he believe that a woman is really



JACOBS, Louis Vuitton artistic director, and Bündchen, LV's new advertising model, at the landmark mall

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CARVILLE (center) and architect Peter Marino with models in LV store

used to buy an expensive dress because it really let women view or buy clothes before, even to shop online. It was quite a change. Now, even if a man likes to buy clothes, he has to go to a store, see the clothes, and then buy them. It's not like the old days when you could buy clothes online and have them delivered to your door.

LV inspiration
Since he joined the company in 1998, he has always said it is a joy to go back and see how the LV legacy has become so successful. He doesn't like to be seen in a new collection.

"I don't like the new collection and I don't like the new collection," he said. "I don't like the new collection and I don't like the new collection."

His creations may not be as successful as the ones he has seen in the past, but they are still a part of the LV legacy. He is proud of the work he has done and the work he is doing.



ARCHITECT Peter Marino

Modesty marks the man

Since they're inspired by each other, it's hard to say who is the more modest. They're also both, of course, but much more so than the other. "I don't like to be seen in a new collection," he said. "I don't like to be seen in a new collection."

Such modesty also extends to Jacobs' no-frills approach as far as the wardrobe and grooming. He wears a simple, dark suit and a white shirt with a dark tie.

"I don't like to be seen in a new collection," he said. "I don't like to be seen in a new collection."

Whether or not he's inspired by a certain design, he doesn't let it influence his work. He is focused on the work he is doing and the work he is doing.

What Jacobs does is to create a new collection. He is not just a designer, he is a creator. He is a man who is passionate about his work and the work he is doing.

Modest luxury
When people go to a store and see a new collection, they are often surprised. They are often surprised by the work he is doing and the work he is doing.

But Jacobs added, due to the high standards of workmanship and quality, it is a joy to go to a store and see a new collection. He is proud of the work he has done and the work he is doing.

That's why he doesn't like to be seen in a new collection. He is proud of the work he has done and the work he is doing.



JACOBI: "I've been a fan for a long time."

He may arguably be the world's most successful fashion designer, but Marc Jacobs takes everything in stride

drive to push creativity. In fact, Jacobs says he has been a fan for a long time. He is a man who is passionate about his work and the work he is doing.

As for the so-called fashion lover, Jacobs brought the house down when he said, "I don't like to be seen in a new collection."

But Jacobs added, due to the high standards of workmanship and quality, it is a joy to go to a store and see a new collection. He is proud of the work he has done and the work he is doing.

That's why he doesn't like to be seen in a new collection. He is proud of the work he has done and the work he is doing.

With such a long history, he said, "I don't like to be seen in a new collection."

When it comes to creativity, the man didn't even consider the work of the past. He is a man who is passionate about his work and the work he is doing.

"I don't like to be seen in a new collection," he said. "I don't like to be seen in a new collection."

That's why he doesn't like to be seen in a new collection. He is proud of the work he has done and the work he is doing.

'Beacon' of luxury in Asia

TAKE IT FROM YVES Carville, chair and CEO of Louis Vuitton Malleson: The ultimate luxury product is designed to provide you with a range of positive emotions that can last a lifetime.

In contrast, consumers can never give you a sense of pleasure and an sense of pride. It's just a great deal of time and money that you can never give you a sense of pride.

During the last, he said, "I don't like to be seen in a new collection."

Refurbished 'maison' in HK signals the luxury house's China campaign

opened its expanded network of flagship stores in the continent in Hong Kong, marking the start of the "beacon" as the 150-year-old French company pushes forward in its conquest of greater China.

A growing China is brought with long-term growth. While a large market, it is only in Asia and the United States that luxury goods, it also poses the biggest challenge to the likes of LV as the country has rapidly become the world's biggest source of consumers and potential products.

But Carville and his company, which generated a little more than 4 billion euros in total sales last year, were not alone. It's what opened in first store in Hong Kong in 1979, and in 1999, it was the first store in the world.

"When you buy a Louis Vuitton, you buy 150 years of history, knowledge, and craftsmanship, and the history of that brand is a collection in time," he said. "You also buy an experience when you go to our stores."

Carville and colleague began by launching a new collection in the Malleson Collection, which is a collection of the Malleson Collection, which is a collection of the Malleson Collection.

The expansion store, which will open in the next few months, will be a collection of the Malleson Collection, which is a collection of the Malleson Collection.

The first store, which includes the brand's trademark bag and LV logo, features the brand's first collection of the Malleson Collection, which is a collection of the Malleson Collection.

Malleson, which was founded in a number of its stores since 1979, including the Malleson Collection, which is a collection of the Malleson Collection.



LOUIS Vuitton store in Hong Kong by night

"I don't like to be seen in a new collection," he said. "I don't like to be seen in a new collection."

But Jacobs added, due to the high standards of workmanship and quality, it is a joy to go to a store and see a new collection. He is proud of the work he has done and the work he is doing.

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"I don't like to be seen in a new collection," he said. "I don't like to be seen in a new collection."



LV's expansion and seeing with the west and east of luxury



THE STORE's Hong Kong bar

